

*The late Bishop of Rochester's VINDICATION of Bishop Smalridge,  
Dr. Aldrich, and Himself, from the scandalous Reflections of Oldmixon,  
relating to the Publication of Lord Clarendon's History.*

Printed Oct. 26. 1731.

I Have lately seen an Extract of some Passages in Mr. Oldmixon's History of England. The first of them is said to be taken from his Preface to that History, p. 9. and runs in these Words.

"I have, in more than one Place of this History, mentioned the great Reason there is to suspect, that the History of the Rebellion, as it was published at Oxford, was not entirely the Work of the Lord Clarendon; who did indeed write an History of those Times, and, I doubt not, a very good one; wherein, as I have been (I believe) well informed, the Characters of the Kings, whose Reigns are written, were different from what they appear in the Oxford History and its Copy, Mr. Echard's. I speak this by Hear-

"say; but *Hear-say from a Person superior to all Suspicion, and too illustrious to be named*, without leave.

"I also humbly refer it to the Decision of another very honourable Person, whether there is not, to his Knowledge, such an History in Manuscript, still extant; and to a Reverend Doctor, now living, whether he did not see the Oxford Copy, by which the Book was printed, altered, and interpolated, while it was at the Prefs.

"To which I must add, that there is now in Custody of a Gentleman of Distinction, both for Merit and Quality, a History of the Rebellion, of the first Folio Edition, scored, in many Places, by Mr. Edmund Smith, of Christ-Church, Oxon, Author of that excellent Tragedy, *Phædra* and *Hippolytus*; who himself altered the Manuscript History, and added what he has there mark'd, as he confessed, with some of his last Words, before his Death. These Alterations, written with his own Hand, and to be seen by any one that knows it, may be published, on another Occasion, with a farther Account of this Discovery. In the mean Time, for the Satisfaction of the Publick, I insert a Letter, entire, which I received since the last Paragraph was written.

To Mr. \*\*\*\*\*

SIR,

Accidentally looking on some of the Sheets of your History of England, during the Reigns of the Royal House of Stuart, at the Bookseller's, I find, that you mention the History of Lord Clarendon; wherein you justly question the Genuineness of that Book. In order to put the Matter out of Doubt, I here send you the following Account.

"Mr. Edmund Smith, a Man very well known in the learned World, came down to make me a Visit at \*\*\*\*\* about June 1710; where he continued, till he died, about six Weeks after.

"As our Conversation chiefly ran upon Learning and History, you may easily think, that Clarendon's was not forgotten. Upon mentioning that Book, he frankly told me, that there had been a fine History written by Lord Clarendon; but what was published under his Name was only Patch-work, and might as properly be call'd, the *History of Ar— SMALL— and ATTENBURY: For, to his Knowledge, 'twas alter'd; nay, that he himself was employ'd by them to interpolate and alter the Original.*

"He then ask'd me, whether I had the Book by me? If I had, he would *convince me of the Truth of his Assertion*, by the very printed Copy. I immediately brought him the Folio Edition; and the first thing he turned to, was the Character of Mr. Hampden, where is that Expression: *He had a Head to contrive, a Heart to conceive, and a Hand to execute any Villainy.* \*He then declared, it was foisted in by those Reverends.

SIR,

"I have only to add this, that he not only *underlined* this Passage, as a Forgery; but gave, during the short time he lived with me, the same Remark to some Hundreds more.

I am, SIR, &c.

In a Second Passage, said to be taken from pag. 227. of the History it self, Mr. Oldmixon is represented as expressing himself thus.

"In the Character of this great and excellent Man, Mr. Hampden, which we could wish had escaped his (Lord Clarendon's) Drawings, or the Drawings of those clumsy Painters, into whose Hands his Work fell; there is something so very false and base, that such Coin could only come from a College Mint. (In a Word, what was said of CINNA might well be apply'd to HAMPDEN: *He had a Head to contrive, and a Tongue to perswade, and a Hand to execute any Mischief. His Death, therefore, seem'd to be a great Deliverance to the Nation.*)

"There are not Words to express the Infamy of this Slander, and Imposture, nor the unparalleled Wickedness of those Doctors, who foisted so horrid a Reflection into that Character. The Person, who did it, was Mr. Edmund

\* The Words are much softer in the History; where instead of a *Heart to conceive*, we find a *Tongue to perswade*; and, instead of the Word *Villainy*, that of *Mischief*; as the Citation is, in another Part of this Extract, truly made. The unknown Writer of this Letter, while he is charging others with the Crime of falsifying Lord Clarendon's History, should have taken Care to stand clear of it himself.

"Smith, of Oxford, Author of *Phædra* and *Hippolytus*, a Tragedy; who, at his Death, confessed to the Gentleman, in whose House he died, that, among a great Number of Alterations and Additions, which he himself made, in the History of the Rebellion, by Order of Doctor ALDRICH, Doctor ATTERBURY, and Doctor SMALLRIDGE, successive Deans of Christ-Church, this very Saying of CINNA, apply'd to Mr. Hampden, was one; and when he read it to one of those Doctors, he clapped him on the Back, and cry'd, with an Assentation, *It will do*. The Confession Mr. Smith made, and the Remorse he expressed for being concerned in this Imposture, were his last Words.

A great Part of the first of these Passages, including the Letter, is translated *verbatim* into French, and publish'd in a Journal, entitled, *Bibliothèque Raisonnée des Ouvrages des Savans de l'Europe, pour les Mois de Juillet, Août, Septembre 1730. Tome 5me. 1re Partie. A Amsterdam, chez les Westeins & Smith 1730. Art. 5. Pag. 154. &c.*

After which, the Journalist adds the following Reflection.

*Cette découverte fait peu d'honneur aux trois Théologiens qui sont nommés dans la Lettre, & qui ont pourtant tenu un grand rang dans l'Angleterre, & dans la République des Lettres. Comme Mr. ATTERBURY, ci-devant Evêque de Rochester, l'un des trois est encore vivant, il ne sera pas apparemment insensible à une accusation si grave; & le Public attend de lui les éclaircissements que l'intérêt seul de sa réputation semble en exiger. S'il se tait, dans cette rencontre, il n'y a point de doute que la falsification est prouvée; & quand même il ne se taïroit pas, il faut que les éclaircissements soient bien forts pour détruire ces faits.*

This Discovery does little Honour to the three Divines named in the Letter, &c. As Mr. ATTERBURY, heretofore Bishop of Rochester, one of the three, is still living, he will not probably be insensible of so grievous an Accusation; and the Publick expects from him such Accounts of it, as even the Interest of his own Reputation seems to require. If he is silent, on this Occasion, there can be no doubt, but that the Falsification is proved; and should he not be silent, what he shall say, to clear up this Matter, must be very strong, to destroy the Credit of such a Testimony.

Being call'd upon, in this publick Manner, I think myself obliged to declare, that the foregoing Account, in all its Parts, as far as I am any ways concerned, is entirely false and groundless. For I never saw my Lord Clarendon's History in Manuscript, either before, or since the Edition of it; nor ever read a Line of it, but in Print. It was impossible, therefore, that I should deal with Mr. Smith in the Manner represented, with whom (as far as I can recollect) I never exchanged one Word in all my Life; and whom I know not that I ever saw, till after the Edition of that History. If therefore he express'd himself to this Purpose, in his last Moments (as I charitably hope he did not) he wronged me extreamly, and died with a Lie in his Mouth.

This Vindication of the Truth, and myself, is necessary, since I happen to survive the two other worthy Persons mentioned. Were they alive, they would, I doubt not, be equally able, and ready to clear themselves from so foul an Aspersion. As to one of them, Dr. Smalridge, the late Bishop of Bristol, no Suspicion of this kind can possibly rest on his Memory, because He was not any ways concern'd in preparing that History for the Press; but as much a Stranger to the Contents of it, as I my self was, till it came forth in Print. I speak with the more Assurance on this Head, because my great Intimacy with him, as my Contemporary, both at Westminster, and Christ-Church, gave me all the Advantages requisite towards knowing the Truth of what I say. With Dr. Aldrich, the Third Person accused, I was acquainted more at a Distance. However, being called upon in the Manner I am, I will add also what has come to my Knowledge, with regard to the Share, He, and Others had, in the Publication of that History.

The Revising of the Manuscript (written, as I have heard, not very correctly) was committed to the Care of Bishop Sprat, and Dean Aldrich, by the late Earl of Rochester; who himself also assisted in that Revival, from the Beginning to the End of the Work: So that any Changes, made in it, must have had the Consent of those Three Persons. They were Men of Probity and Truth, and incapable of Conspiring in a Design to impose on the Publick. I can cite nothing, that is material in this Point, from the Mouth of the Earl, with whom I rarely conversed; but the Bishop and the Dean, to whom I severally succeeded in the Deanries of Christ-Church and Westminster, and in the See of Rochester, have occasionally more than once assured me, that no Additions whatsoever were made to the Manuscript History. And even the Earl, in his Preface to the first Volume (for His I take it to be, tho' no Name is affixed to it) has publickly protested his Innocence in this Respect, where he declares, that *They who put forth the History* (he means Himself and his Brother, as appears from what follows) *durst not take upon them to make any Alterations in a Work of this kind, solemnly left with them to be published, whenever it should be published, as it was delivered to them.*

Could He, and the two other Persons by him employed, be supposed to have made any Additions, notwithstanding such Assurances to the contrary, yet their good Sense (if not their Integrity) would have prevented, at least, their re-touching those Characters, which are allowed to be the most distinguished and beautiful Part of the Work, and to have something of Original in them that is not to be imitated. The After-strokes of any less able Pencil, intermix'd with those of the first Masterly Hand, would soon be discovered: And yet I am perswaded, the most discerning Eye can find out no Traces of such a Mixture; no, not in the Character of Mr. Hambden, even in those Words, at the Close of it, against which Mr. Oldmixon so warmly declaims. They are perfectly in the Style and Manner of my Lord Clarendon; they contain nothing new in them, but only sum up, in short, what he had scattered through different

ferent Parts of the two first Volumes. Let the Reflections there made be never so severe, they may naturally be supposed, in the Warmth of Composure, to have come, from the Pen of an Historian, who had himself with Zeal opposed Mr. *Hambden's* Measures, and both seen, and felt the sad Consequences of them: But, that the Editors of his History, no ways concerned in those Transactions, should, Sixty Years afterwards, coolly and deliberately make such a needless Insertion, is not to be imagined.

The Complaint, on this and other Heads, should have been brought against these Editors, while it was capable of being thoroughly examined; at present, it comes a little too late, unless it were better supported: Their very Characters, to those who knew them, and the Nature of the Evidence, to those who did not, will be judged a Sufficient Confutation of it. For, pray, what is this Evidence? It consists in an *Hear-say from a Person, superior to all Suspicion*, it seems, but *too illustrious to be named*: In an *Appeal to another very Honourable Person, to a Reverend Doctor now living, and to a Gentleman of Distinction, both for Merit and Quality*; none of whose Names are thought fit to be owned. The only one produced in the Case, is that of Mr. *Smith*, *the Author of an excellent Tragedy*; but certainly not an Author of Rank and Weight enough to blast the Credit of such an excellent History. Of what Use can his Testimony be to this Purpose (even supposing the Account of it exact,) when it is undoubtedly false, as to Two of the Three Persons it is levelled at, Dr. *Smalridge* and myself; and may therefore be justly presumed alike false, as to the Third, Dr. *Aldrich*? Mr. *Smith* appears to have been so little in the Secret of the Edition of that Book, as not to have known even the Hands, through which it passed: And is not therefore to be relied upon in his Accounts of any other Circumstances relating to it; especially, with regard to Dr. *Aldrich*, his Gouverour at *Christ-Church*; for whom his personal Aversion, and the true Reasons of it, are too well understood to need explaining. I forbear to say any thing harsh of One, not able to answer for Himself; but many, now alive, who knew them both, know how improbable, and altogether incredible, it is, that Mr. *Smith* should have had the least Share in Dr. *Aldrich's* Confidence, on so nice, or, indeed, on any Occasion. The Gentleman, who seems to be *convinced of the Truth of Mr. Smith's Assertions*, by his having pointed out and *underlined* the Passages, *in Print*, which, he said, he was employ'd (by the three successive Deans) to *interpolate and alter*, in Manuscript, must surely have been very willing to be convinced; otherwise, he would not have taken a mere Assertion for a Proof, in such a Cause, and from such a Person. The Story of this Death-bed Declaration slept for about Twenty Years; near Thirty have passed, since the History of the Rebellion was published (I mean the first Part of it) and not a few, since the Death of every Person that either was, or is falsely said to have been, concerned in that Publication, myself only excepted. I might, probably, at the Distance of *Montpelier*, where I was, when Mr. *Oldmixon* wrote, never have heard of what he lays to my Charge (Intelligence of that kind being, as he knows, not very open to me) or, should it reach me, I might yet, in my present Circumstances, be supposed not over-solicitous to appear in the Disproof of it. The Delay of the Accusation therefore, if without Design, was not without its Advantages; and, had it been deferred a little longer, till I was not only out of the Way, but out of the World, it had had a still fairer Chance towards being uncontradicted, and, consequently, credited. I have lived to hear this idle Tale, and to bear Witness against it: There is no Vanity in hoping, that, old as I am, I shall outlive the Belief of it. An *Holland-Journal* gave me the first Notice, how I had been treated, and, by that Means, an Opportunity of vindicating myself; which I was the rather determined not to decline, because I suffered in Company with others, Men of great Note and Merit, through whose Sides the Authority of a noble and useful Part of our *English History* was struck at. Where I alone am aspersed and wronged, I can, I thank God, more easily practise Patience, and submit to Indignities and Injuries in Silence. A foreign Writer has used me, in this Case, with greater Civility, and Temper, than Mr. *Oldmixon*, whom I know not that I have ever offended. I forgive him his ill Words, and his hard Thoughts; and only desire him, for the future, not to indulge himself in ill-natur'd Relations of this kind, without better Vouchers. His Attack on me, and on the Dead, who, he thought, might be insulted with equal Safety, is no Proof of a generous and worthy Mind; nor has he done any Honour to his own History, by the fruitless Pains he has taken to discredit that of my Lord *Clarendon*: which, like the Character of its Author, will gain Strength by Time; and will be in the Hands and Esteem of all Men, when Mr. *Oldmixon's* unjust Censure of it will not be remember'd, or not regarded.

FR. ROFFEN

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## Advertisement.

Decemb. 1<sup>st</sup>. 1732.

THO' the improbable Story, handed into the World by one *Oldmixon*, in the Preface, Pages the 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup>. and in Page 227. of his Book, called *the History of England, during the Reigns of the Royal House of Stuart*, deserves no farther Notice, after that which has been taken of it, by the late Bishop of Rochester in the foregoing *Vindication*; yet to prevent any Person's being imposed upon, by so gross, and bold a Fiction, there is part of the Life of the Lord Chancellor *Clarendon*, written ALL in his Lordships OWN HAND, lodged in the *Bodleian Library*, to remain there for twelve Months, from Christmas 1732, where any one may be satisfied, that his Lordship concluded Mr. *Hambden*'s Character in these Words, viz.

“He had a heade to contrive, and a tounge to perswade, and a hand  
“to execute any mischieve, and his death appeared to be a greate deli-  
“rance to the Nation.

There are also some Parts of his Lordships History preserved in HIS OWN HAND-WRITING, which have been seen, by several Persons of Quality, and others, in the Possession of Mr. *Radcliffe* of *Bartlets-Buildings* in *Holborn*, one of the Executors of the last Earl of *Clarendon*, wherein are THE VERY SAME WORDS of Mr. *Hambden*'s Character, that are in THE PRINTED HISTORY, which the aforesaid *Oldmixon* pretends were foisted in by Mr. *Edmund Smith*.

By this Manuscript it does likewise appear, that the *History of the Rebellion* was so named by the Noble Author Himself.

F· I · N · I · S.